

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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[PRICE 10D.]

"By an *election*, I mean a real choice, made by a majority of all the persons having a right to vote; and that, too, every time members are to be chosen; for, if, from the indifference of the people, or from their disgust at perceiving that the influence of certain opulent men is irresistible, the members be returned without actually being voted for by a majority of the electors, the opulent few, or even the president solely, may as well make the return at once, without the ceremony of an election, the rights of which, in such case, become a mere nullity, or, which is still worse, serve to sanction tyrannical acts, under the pretence, that whatever is done by the legislature is done by the people; whereas, in fact, these latter have not the least share in any enactment, because they have no real voice in electing the members of the legislature."—MABLY'S Letters upon the United States.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER. LETTER IV.

GENTLEMEN;

Before I proceed to the main object of this letter, which is to state to you the reasons which would have prevented me from standing forward to give you an opportunity of shewing your abhorrence at being transferred from hand to hand, like the venal slaves of a family borough, give me leave to advert for a moment, to the subject of my last letter, to wit, the part which Mr. SHERIDAN has borne in this transaction.—In a subsequent page of this sheet, you will find a letter addressed to me, remonstrating against what I had written in my last letter, and justifying, or attempting to justify, Mr. SHERIDAN. It is always my way to publish whatever is transmitted to me in answer to what I myself write and publish; and this is a duty incumbent upon me when the answer is in vindication of any person the purity of whose views I have questioned. The letter of Mr. Homan, therefore, though I know him not; though I have never before heard his name mentioned, and though several other letters from valuable correspondents, had a prior claim to insertion, has been, without a moment's loss of time, communicated to those same readers, to whom my animadversions have been communicated.—Mr. SHERIDAN seemed to me to be reduced to this dilemma, to be considered either as having abandoned the electors of Westminster either *from the fear of losing his places*, or as having *betrayed them for the sake of a reward of some sort or other*.—That there is a vast difference in the two your own hearts will, I hope, teach you; and, you will not have forgotten, that my opinion, as stated in my last, was unequivocally on the side of the latter. I was convinced, in my own mind, that, as I there expressed myself, "from the beginning he

"was in concert with the Lord and his Steward;" and, the facts which I stated as the grounds of such conviction were, that, on Sunday, the 14th of September (four days previous to the first meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern) Mr. SHERIDAN held a meeting of his friends, particularly *of the press*, at Somerset-House; that there it was loudly asserted that Lord Percy ought to be opposed, and that it was clearly understood that Mr. SHERIDAN was to be the popular candidate; that from this meeting sprang the public meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, where Mr. SHERIDAN not only declined himself, but recommended that very Lord Percy. From these facts, I drew, what I think was a very natural conclusion, that Mr. SHERIDAN took pains to gain you, and to hold you in his hand, merely for the purpose of acquiring the merit of handing you over, in a state perfectly helpless, to Lord Percy and his heirs and assigns for ever. If my premised facts be not correct, my conclusion falls of course; and, Mr. HOMAN asserts, that there was no *meeting* at Somerset-House; but, he acknowledges, that *a few friends* dropped in by *accident*, and he does not deny, that, amongst those friends at least, it was clearly understood, and that too from Mr. SHERIDAN's own language, that Lord Percy was by him regarded as an improper person, and that he, Mr. Sheridan, would stand forward to assert the independence of the city. Now, whether the assemblage spoken of by me ought to have been called a *meeting*, or not, is, I think, of little importance; but, there is one assertion, made by Mr. Homan, which is of great importance, and that is, that, on Sunday, the 14th of September, Mr. SHERIDAN did not know, what he learnt the next day, to wit, "that the ministry, that all the leading men in the city, and that all the members of the *Whig Club*, from the Duke of Norfolk downwards, even so low as Mr. WISART,



"the snuff-man, had, *before* Mr. Fox's death, pledged themselves to support "Lord Percy." It is truly strange, that, considering who and what Mr. Sheridan is; considering his connections, his intimacy with the Whigs, of whose Club he is a member, and, above all, considering his close connection with Mr. Fox, Mr. Whitbread, and all those who have distinguished themselves in this affair; when we consider all this, it is truly strange, that, even on Sunday the 14th September, he never should have heard of this mighty mass of pledges to Lord Percy, and it is strange, especially to me, who, with a thousandth part of Mr. Sheridan's advantages in this respect, was well informed, on the preceding Thursday, that the Lord's Steward (the Lord being absent from town) had obtained a great part of the pledges above-mentioned. Yet, it is *possible*, that Mr. Sheridan might on the 14th, have heard nothing of the matter. Upon this point of fact, however, the question rests, whether Mr. Sheridan betrayed the electors, or whether he abandoned them from the fear of losing his places; and, that point I am very willing to leave to the decision of the reader, with this observation, that the presumption was, at any rate, quite strong enough on the other side to warrant my conclusion, though, I do think, that against that presumption is now to be placed the circumstance of Mr. Sheridan's not being present either at the nomination of the Lord, at Willis's Rooms, or at his *election* in Covent Garden, where Mr. Whitbread was selected as the chief operator. To which, I think, may be added, the resentment evidently felt, against the Whig Club and Mr. Whitbread, by Mr. Homan, who, if not dictated to, certainly speaks, or thinks he speaks, the sentiments of Mr. Sheridan himself.—But, Mr. Homan, not content with exculpating Mr. Sheridan from the charge of having *betrayed* you, wishes also to exculpate him from that of having abandoned you. He says, that, talk as long as we will about public spirit and popularity, a contest for Westminster must, after all, "*be decided by MONEY*;" and, says he, "where was Mr. Sheridan to have found the resources? What," adds he, "would *you* have subscribed Mr. Cobbett?" Certainly not one penny. Not one penny towards the support of any man. Not one penny to insure the election of myself. No; if it be money you want, go take it from those who know how to get repaid out of taxes imposed upon you by their vote; if it be porter you want, go, base wretches, and suck it from the barrels

of those who will take care to squeeze it out of you again in sweat and in blood. But (begging leave to argue for a moment, upon this odious hypothesis) Mr. Homan seems to have conceived the notion, that, unless Mr. Sheridan *succeeded* in finally defeating Lord Percy, his opposition to him would have been of *no use*. I am of a very different opinion. Final success would have been desirable; but, would it have been of no use to give nearly one half of you, at any rate, an opportunity of shewing your dislike to the man whom both he and you disapproved of? Would it have been of no use to prove to the world, that the city of Westminster still valued its independence? Would it have been of no use to cause the family of Northumberland to expend sixty or seventy thousand pounds of that money which Mr. Homan represents as the sure means of deciding elections in Westminster? Mr. Homan seems to perceive what I cannot for my life perceive, and that is, some necessity, moral or physical, for Mr. Sheridan being a member of parliament. If I were to admit this, then, indeed, I should be ready enough to allow, that the fear of a final defeat was a motive that might have induced Mr. Sheridan to decline; but this I do not admit; and, I am, besides, certain, that, if, in such a cause, he had had the courage to expose his places and his seat, no minister in England would have dared to touch either.—There is one reason, which Mr. Homan gives for Mr. Sheridan's declining, which, it seems to me, ought to have been withheld, namely, that in persevering in a contest against Lord Percy, he might have embarrassed an ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE, to whom he is known to be attached by the strongest ties. What! Does Mr. Sheridan's defender say, then, that to have stood forward in support of the independence of Westminster, would have been to embarrass that Illustrious Personage? Can it be supposed possible, that that Illustrious Personage has interests *opposite* to the support of your rights and liberties? Can there be supposed to exist in that Illustrious Personage's mind, any motive for preventing Mr. Sheridan from doing that which a sense of public duty urges him to do? And, if such a motive did exist; and, if, the Illustrious Personage were to act upon that motive, and were to issue his commands accordingly, would you commend, or excuse, Mr. Sheridan for obeying those commands? If you would, why, then, the words public duty, the elective franchise, representation in parliament, and all the other terms and epithets appertaining to this part of our constitution,





are mere empty sounds; for, if the member for your city be not the man you would have chosen, what is it to you from what cause, and by what means he has been imposed upon you? With respect to the Illustrious Personage in question, and also with respect to those who think that no man ought to risk his seat in parliament, Mr. Homan has provided (supposing his charge of venality against you to be true) a defence perfectly complete for Mr. Sheridan; but, if I were to admit the charge of venality, a charge which, *notwithstanding all Mr. Sheridan's praises of your public spirit and purity*, I am by no means prepared wholly to deny, the defence of Mr. Homan would not satisfy me; for, when, in answer to my complaint, that I have been deprived of an opportunity of opposing a member that is unfit to represent me, I am told, that it could not have been otherwise without risking the seat of one man, or without embarrassing the arrangements of another man, what is it but to tell me, that my interests are not considered as any thing, that to talk of my rights and my privileges is a mockery, that I am, in fact, a degraded instrument in the hands of ambitious men, and, in one word, that, though I am amused with the conceits about freedom. I am *a slave*, or, at least, full as much a slave as are the people of other countries, where there are no such things as elections?—When I talk of the *selfishness* of Mr. Sheridan, does Mr. Homan suppose, that I mean to confine myself to his *love of money*? I mean, that he has always his *own views* to answer; the views of vanity and ambition, and sometimes of pecuniary interest; but always views, where *self* stands, before either party or public good; and this he has verified in numerous instances. I do not say, that the love of the mere profits of his places (I speak in the plural, because whatever his son has must be considered as his, and he has, besides, two places of his own); I do not say, that the sheer desire of pecuniary gain has induced him to abandon the electors of Westminster; but, I say, that, if it be admitted, that he objected to Lord Percy; if it be admitted, that, until he heard of the formidable combination of pledges in favour of the Lord, he was disposed to *oppose* him; if this be admitted, and, I think no one will be bold enough to deny it, then, I say, it is impossible to account for his abandonment of the electors, and more especially for his *recommending of Lord Percy to them*, unless upon the ground of his apprehensions for his places, his favour with the Prince of Wales, and for his consequent

importance in the world.—Whatever may have been the motive of Mr. Sheridan, and whatever you and the world may think of his conduct, I am perfectly satisfied that, whether intentionally or not, he has been the principal cause of the Lord's becoming your member; for, if, at the meeting of the 18th of September, he had not, after having softened and seduced your minds by his eloquence, recommended Lord Percy to you, a person would have been found to oppose the Lord, though thrust upon you by a combination so formidable. If he had no intention to become a candidate himself, why did he cause the meeting to be called, and why did he harangue you? If from no selfish motive, why did he *recommend* Lord Percy? This is what sticks with me. I cannot get over this. To cause a meeting to be called, there to harangue and to be applauded, while one's wife and family are spectators from a gallery or orchestra, may, for aught I know, be natural enough; it may be harmless, at least, and, therefore excusable; but, to conclude by a recommendation of the very man, whom he would have opposed, if he had been able, was an act of meanness for which it is impossible to invent a sufficient apology, and of which it is impossible to find an example, except in the conduct of some member of the whig club.—Mr. Homan insinuates that I have some personal feeling hostile to Mr. Sheridan. I have none, and I can have none. What I, and almost any other man, might envy in him, his wit and his eloquence, are very far indeed above my pretensions; and, as to his places, and his favour either with princes or with the rabble, they are as far beneath my desires. I regard him, and I always have regarded him, as a man of great talents, particularly of that sort which can be most easily and effectually employed in the influencing of weak minds; and, if I have frequently taken occasion to animadvert upon his conduct, it has been, I can conscientiously assert, with no other view, than simply that of preventing, as far as I was able, those talents from producing an effect mischievous to that country, in the welfare and honour of which I have as deep an interest as Mr. Sheridan, or, as his Illustrious patron.—Now, Gentlemen, as to the reasons that would have prevented me from standing forward, as a candidate, in support of your independence, those objections, stated in my address, which was published in the form of an advertisement, weighty as they were, would have been got over when I saw you so completely deserted; when I saw you almost literally go a begging for a candidate.



The very circumstances, which, apparently, deterred others from coming forward, would have been an inducement to me. The truth is, that it is our misfortune, that the electors of every place have *not* to go a begging for candidates. It is our misfortune, that, so profitable, in one way or another, is the post become, that candidates go a begging to electors; and, it but too often happens, that they assume a tone and manner, which rather than have recourse to, many a common vagrant would expire with hunger under a hedge. With me, therefore, your distressed situation would have been a strong motive for coming forward. The faint prospect of final success would have been no obstacle at all. Money I would have expended none; and, any labour that a contest would have occasioned me, would have been amply compensated for by the pleasure and the probable public good, which would have arisen from being at liberty openly to speak wholesome truths for the space of fourteen or fifteen days; to which may be added, the powerful motives arising from a fair calculation of the sweating that I should have occasioned to my opponent's purse, and from the probable consequences which my exertions would have produced with respect to a future election. I must confess, too, that to have met those *Whigs* upon your hustings; to have told them to their teeth of all their former professions, of all their forfeited promises and pledges, of all their toasts and songs and resolutions about the liberties of the people; to have compared their practice with their professions; to have enumerated the places and pensions they have created, the jobs they have done, the sums they have swallowed without, apparently, having damped their appetite. I must confess, that the prospect of enjoying this satisfaction would have been a strong temptation; but, when I took an impartial view of *your* conduct; when I saw you receive the speech of Mr. Sheridan with shouts for the living and with lamentations for the dead; when I heard you resolve unanimously, that a placeman, and a sinecure placeman too, was the properest person to be your representative; when I heard you quietly assenting to the proposition, that it was impossible to find, in all this world, a representative equal in merit to the man, who had left you for years without being represented at all, and who, during his six months of office had acted in direct opposition to all the main principles on account of which you had repeatedly chosen him; and, finally, when I heard you receive the name of Whitbread with bursts of applause, even after he had been chiefly

instrumental in depriving you of the chance of obtaining a representative agreeable to your professed wishes; when I heard and saw all this, I hesitated not to conclude, that the time was not yet come for a person like me to stand as a candidate for Westminster; I hesitated not, one moment, to conclude, that it required some years of discipline under the hands of the lord and his steward; that it required events such as had not yet come to pass; that it required much yet from experience, that great teacher of wisdom, to bring you to that temper of mind, without which no representative could possibly render you any service; and, I am, upon still further reflection, convinced, that until you see through all the intrigues and frauds of the Whig Club; until you despise all the patriotic mummeries of such combinations of place-hunters; until to use any watch-word of party in your presence would be to endanger the nose or ears of the orator; until this be the case, I am finally convinced, that to give you an opportunity of asserting your independence would be a waste of an honest man's time and trouble. I speak, of course, with numerous exceptions, and I know that the few are not to be despised for the folly or baseness of the many; but, I am afraid that a majority of you have little else in view than your private interests and gratifications, and that the defender of Mr. Sheridan is right when he says, that, after all, a contest in Westminster must finally be decided by money. "Well, and what is that to you?" you will probably say. It is something to me; because your Lord will help to *tax me*. But, if you will take this tone, excuse me if I laugh, when I hear you whining and crying about taxes; excuse me if I remind you of your shouts of applause bestowed upon place-hunting patriots; excuse me, if I ask you what consolation you now feel from reflecting upon "the chair, with a velvet cushion," in which the Lord was carried round Covent-Garden and along the Strand; excuse me, if I should ask you what a taste has been left by his beer and the orts of his table, which we are told he so generously bestowed upon you; excuse me if I ask you whether you remember how the high-blooded Sire sat smiling at the window, as the news-papers tell us, while you, like beasts of burden, were carrying the son upon your shoulders, and if I reproach you with worse than beastly unreasonableness if you complain of burdens hereafter. As often as I hear you complain, so often will I remind you of your conduct at this election; for, though I am convinced, that you have been miserably duped, I have seen but a

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very few of you a disposition to resent the duplicity; and you appear to me to be just as ready and as willing to be duped to-morrow as you were yesterday. Having thus acted, having so unequivocally applauded place-hunters and borough-monopolisers, let us, I pray you, see you conduct yourselves in future like peaceable, contented, obedient creatures. No more of your Palace-Yard meetings, I beseech you, now that you have so decidedly expressed your despair at the loss of that man, who, a few years ago, met you in that same Palace-Yard to exhort you to petition against that very Tax upon Income, which, the moment he was in power, he assisted to double. Let us hear no more of your clamouring against speculators and depredators, now that you have unanimously resolved, that the man of all others the most fit to represent you, is that very man, who, when out of office, pledged his word and honour to bring forward a great charge of depredation, and who, the moment almost that he entered office, declined doing it, lest he should thereby create divisions in the ministry, that is to say, lest he should lose his place. No: let us no more be pestered with your complaints; but go and inscribe the name of your city upon the list along with Old Sarum and Honiton, the electors of which have, at any rate, this merit, that they boast not, neither do they even talk, of that independence and public spirit about which you have always been making such pompous professions.—Having thus, at every stage of the transaction, stated my opinions to you with the greatest freedom and with perfect sincerity, I shall, as the consequences of your conduct come upon you, always have the consolation to reflect, that I have exerted my utmost to prevent them. I wish, though I cannot say that I expect, you to shew more sense and virtue upon a future occasion, and in that wish I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 9th October, 1806.

#### SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

Under this head, it was my intention to have offered some observations upon the ravings, which are afloat, in some of the newspapers, relative to *a new war upon the continent of Europe*; but, I could not go into these observations at any length, without excluding the letter in defence of Mr. Sheridan, which, all circumstances considered, I could not prevail upon myself to do. To the two other letters contained in this sheet, I also

beg leave to beseech the attention of the reader. The letter upon the *poor-laws* or *pauper-system*, contains much originality, and appears to me to be worthy of general attention. That *something* must be done upon this subject every one now allows; as to *what* is to be done free discussion alone can lead us to a rational determination; and, thank God, this is a subject which we may yet discuss, without having recourse to figure or fable.—N. B. Even the *prepared report* of the “*DELICATE INVESTIGATION*” is not yet forth-coming! I always thought the frothy writers upon this subject were speaking without authority. The fact is, that a report *prepared*, that is to say, narrowed and stretched as it might suit the purposes of the persons engaged in the preparation, would be believed by nobody. It was a gross attempt to impose upon the public, to say that *two barristers* were employed by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales in such a sort of preparation. I doubted, nay, I denied, the fact, as soon as it was stated, and I am truly happy to perceive, that the public are no longer deceived by the statement. It is the unanimous opinion, of course, that any thing that has been said to the disadvantage of her royal highness, or of any other royal personage, is, and must be, *false*; but, it is an opinion, not less unanimous, that, if *any publication* upon the subject takes place, it should not be a *garbled* one. Things are very well as they are; but, if we are to have a report, let us have the *whole* of it; so say I, and so we say all. If the whole of the official report, and also the whole of the evidence, be laid before the public, I, for one, shall never trouble my readers with any comment thereon, unless the report should, which is very improbable, misrepresent the evidence; but, if we have nothing but a selection from the report, nothing but a *prepared* report, I shall hold myself bound to endeavour to elucidate whatever the *two barristers* may have left in a state of obscurity.—Botley, 9th October, 1806.

MR. SHERIDAN.

SIR,—As you with great appearance of manliness often sign your name to the severest strictures on public matters and persons; I am of opinion, that when an antagonist means to arraign your conduct and opinions at the bar of the public, and there exist no particular motives for concealing who he is, you are intitled to similar openness from him. I, therefore, send you my address with this, having indeed, little or no objection to put my name to it at length. In your third letter to the Electors of the City



of Westminster, you have made a most unjust and unwarrantable attack upon Mr. Sheridan. My connection with that gentleman's family, and the opportunities I have had of being *really* informed upon the subject your letter relates to, authorise me to inform you that the whole of your statement is founded in error and misinformation, and that there is not one syllable of truth in the assertion of facts, which you seem so hastily to have picked up from rumour and hearsay, or so credulously to have adopted from the interested malignity of faction. Your purpose is to endeavour to prove, that Mr. Sheridan was either not sincere in his desire to assert the independence of the City of Westminster; or, that he deserted the cause upon some unworthy compromise with the Duke of Northumberland's friends, or with the government. Mr. Sheridan in his address to the electors at the meeting at the Crown and Anchor, on the 18th instant, anticipated the probability of insinuations of this sort following his retreat; but, I should rather imagine he could not have expected them from *you*. I mean only that he could not have expected them from any man possessing common sense, and a common knowledge of political character, arising from observation and the testimony of past conduct. Mr. Sheridan's own words, however, are perhaps the best reply on this occasion, as they are also to the not unnatural nor very extravagant suspicion (though most unfounded when applied to *him*), that the apprehension of losing his office was the leading motive that had decided his conduct. "Illiberal warnings" said Mr. Sheridan, "have been held out, most unauthoritatively I am sure, that by persevering in the present contest I may risk my official situation; and, if I retire, I am aware that minds as coarse as un candid, may assign the dread of that as my motive. To such insinuations I shall scorn to make any other reply than a reference to the whole of my past career. I consider it as no boast to say, that any one who has struggled through such a portion of life as I have without acquiring an office, is not likely to abandon his principles, or his duty, to retain one when acquired. On this ground were I to decline the present contest, I should disdain the imputation that sought to bring the purity of my purpose into doubt; and soon after, I know not that I have hitherto shrunk in place from opinions I have maintained while in opposition." After these extracts, I really feel that I ought to apologize to Mr. Sheridan for not leaving the question to the manly test he has referred it to. But,

as you sir, are very expert in finding pretences for overlooking or discolouring when it answers your purpose, the meritorious tenor of years of political consistency and personal sacrifice, I cannot resist the desire I feel, to try to convince, *even you*, of the perverseness and injustice of your present attack, and not without a hope, that as there is no manliness in obstinacy, you may find it not unbecoming the impartiality you profess, to retract what is proved to be erroneous, and atone for what was meant to be injurious. And now, sir, for your *facts*. I pass over your doubts of Mr. Sheridan looking always to *self* in politics—Mr. SHERIDAN a SELFISH politician! SELFISH politician!—Mr. Cobbett you do not think this. You assert, that there was a meeting privately called by Mr. Sheridan himself, at which he declaimed against Lord Percy's pretensions, saying "all that his mind could suggest, and all that his eloquence could express." You add, "this meeting was, as I understand, held at his quarters in Somerset Place, on Sunday the 14th instant. He there called together all those persons most likely to be able to aid him in a contest for Westminster." Now for the fact. No meeting was ever called or existed at Somerset House, on Sunday the 14th, nor did any meeting of any sort ever take place at Somerset Place, or elsewhere, of Mr. Sheridan's friends, until the public one in which they shared, at the Crown and Anchor, on Thursday the 18th. Mr. Sheridan saw a very few friends on Sunday, who called individually in the course of the day, to know his intentions, and two or three whose opinion he had desired. On that day it was certainly his intention to offer himself. No decisive answer had been received from Lord Percy, and there were strong reasons to believe, that he might decline in the case of his pretensions not appearing to meet the free and voluntary wishes of a majority of the electors. Sir Francis Burdett knows this fact. Mr. Sheridan says in his address, "it was never ascertained to me until Monday last, after this meeting had been fixed, that Lord Percy would certainly be a candidate; and then my friends hesitated, in the hope that it might be left to arbitration, which candidate should withdraw: that hope has failed." I think, sir, your question, why Mr. Sheridan had not "declined previous to the calling the meeting," is answered. You are pleased to assert, that it appears clear to you, that from the beginning he (Mr. Sheridan) was in concert with the lord and his steward (Mr. Wilson). This deserves no other answer than my first quo-



tation from Mr. Sheridan's address; but you do not believe so. You shall know the fact. Mr. Sheridan never had the least idea of the support of government; and, as it afterwards appeared, of *all* Mr. Fox's personal friends, and of all the great aristocratic interests in Westminster, and of the whole Whig party, having been pledged to Lord Percy until the Saturday evening after Mr. Fox's death, when he was informed of it by Mr. Wilson, of whom you may inquire respecting the degree of *concert* and *good understanding* which succeeded between them! Whoever has imposed on you any statement contrary to this, has duped you by gross and impudent falsehood.—You proceed to say, "what is to be his (Mr. Sheridan's) *reward* I shall not pretend to predict, but you may have the satisfaction to assure yourselves that you will have to contribute towards it whatever it may be." This, now, is one of those slips of spleen and impatience, which, on the least consideration, you would not have fallen into, and which it would be an affront to Mr. Sheridan to notice further. But according to your mode of reasoning, and the opinion you occasionally affect to hold of Mr. Sheridan, the *allowing him to retain his office*, ought to have been considered by you as a sufficient *reward*. You say, "there was, indeed, a threat thrown out in a ministerial paper, that Mr. Sheridan would lose his place if he opposed the lord;" and you very coolly add, "and I am of opinion that *such would have been the case*." Now, sir, let us see how the account would have stood in the case of Mr. Sheridan's persevering in the contest. Mr. Sheridan found against him, on the moment he heard of Mr. Fox's death, the *whole power and influence of government engaged to Lord Percy*. He found, that *answers had been actually received three days before Mr. Fox's death from all the great noblemen connected with Mr. Fox or the government, promising decided support to Lord Percy*. He found, that *all the Whig Club, from the Duke of Norfolk down to Mr. Wishart, had embarked in the same cause*. He found, that a great and illustrious, and, by him, ever to be revered personage,\*\*\*, to whom all deference was due from all, most especially on the subject of a successor to his departed beloved friend, but by no one so decidedly due as from Mr. Sheridan, would be placed in a situation of some degree of embarrassment by a contest, the ill effects of which, in every point of view, no man had equal means or right to appreciate or judge of as his Royal Highness. He found, that Sir Francis Burdett (with whom he had a distinct explanation on the *very Sunday to*

which you, Mr. Cobbett, refer) with such interest as he could command in Westminster, had made his election in favour of Lord Percy. In the other scale, what was to be placed! Mr. Sheridan's own personal popularity, the justice of his cause, and certainly the popular sentiment and voice in his favour. But can you, sir, or any one, pretend to forget that a Westminster contest, pushed to the extreme, becomes at least a mere contest of money; that Lord John Townshend's election, and one of Mr. Fox's, cost for their triumph at least £40,000 for each election, from the aristocratic purse; and where were Mr. Sheridan's resources, granting his own subscription to have been the loss of his place? or, what would you, Mr. Cobbett, have subscribed, had he been so foolish and unreasonable as to have thrown himself on a mendicant subscription from those who, however honest and zealous in their support, could not possibly have attempted even to meet the exhaustless funds of his opposers without injury and distress to themselves? I find I am going into a length, which at the time I write, your paper cannot allow me. I shall resume the subject, not being disposed to pay so ill a compliment to your fairness as to doubt your ready insertion of what I have already written.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, FREDERICK HOMAN—9, Cecil-street, Strand.

## THE POOR LAWS.

To Mr. John Bone.

SIR,—Having frequently endeavoured to fix public attention on the increase of paupers which has taken place in England and Wales, within the last century, as containing in itself all the proofs that can be required as to the existence of a pernicious system of political economy, and of a declining state of general prosperity, general happiness, and general security. I was particularly anxious to peruse your "Outlines of a Plan for the Reduction of the Poors Rate," in the hope of finding in it the preparatory requisites in all plans, which I never yet met with in any plan of this description; namely, a clear and distinct view of all the leading, remote and immediate, primary and collateral, positive and negative, causes of those evils, the removal of which is the object, and of the adequacy of the means intended to eradicate them. The necessity of such a view prior to the formation of any plan, is established by the certainty, that if in the application of its principle we may block up the channels of one evil, we are liable to open the sluices of another, and so to make bad worse, or gain nothing by our labour. But while I have to applaud the ob-



ject of your plan, and to admire its mechanism, I have painfully to regret that the survey which I have taken of the immediate and remote, &c. &c. causes of poor's rate, and of the means of removing them, compel me to offer its principle as a proof undeniable, or rather the effect of it as an evidence of the most conclusive nature, that you have taken no such preparatory view; and to reject it as destructive of its object. You perceive an advantage accruing to the merchants and farmers, and a disadvantage to the labourer and consumer, arising from the practice of the former in withholding goods and stock from market, for the purpose of keeping up the price; and, therefore, without any attention to the natural consequence of keeping labour back for a similar purpose, and apparently on the authority of Mr. Malthus, you dogmatically assert, with him, "It would evidently be for the interest of the institution to keep up the price of labour by the same means that the merchant uses in favour of his goods, and the farmer of his stock, withhold it from market." Limiting my observations to the physical effect of this proposition, I cannot investigate its merits on the moral grounds on which its pernicious consequences admits of demonstration; but the advantages of the principle to one party, and its disadvantages to the other, be all the evidences that can be produced in favour of its extension to the labourer, I will observe that such proofs hold equally good in favour of robbery, as the means of recovering what may have been lost by theft. I do admit, however, that the balance of power, between the labourer and the employer which is aimed at in your plan, must be established, otherways, to attempt the reduction of the poor's rate, or any other measure of general good, can only command the degree of pity which is due to well-intentioned folly. But to guard against the concomitant evils of means in their nature, or rendered by circumstance inapplicable to the case, and to point out those that apply with the least possible obscurity, it is as necessary to bear in mind and understand the principles on which our true interest in all our capacities, rests itself, as it is to have organs of sight to enjoy the advantages of light. As leading to the knowledge of those principles, Smith, on the *Wealth of Nations*, observes, as the fundamental axiom of the science of political economy, "whatever may be the state of dexterity, skill, and judgment with which labour is applied in any nation, the abundance or scantiness of its annual supply must depend, during the continuance of that state, upon the pro-

portion between the number of those who are annually employed in useful labour, and that of those who are not so employed." As this is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so far as it goes; and as it is no less certain that the happiness or misery, the independence or slavery of any nation, must depend upon the abundance or scantiness of its annual supply, the merits or demerits of any scheme of political economy can only be determined by a clear perception of its tendency to increase or diminish the number of those who are annually employed in the creation of it. The principle, however, is not carried far enough, to steer the political economist safe through those rocks and shoals on which he is liable to be shipwrecked in his pursuit of the supply, or of any thing that depends upon its abundance. Our venerable author should have observed, that the wants and conveniencies of nations, just like those of private families, divide useful labour into four primary divisions; namely, agriculture, mechanism, trade, and coinage; and, therefore, that the abundance or scantiness of the annual supply does not more depend upon the proportion between the productive and unproductive funds of labour, than upon that between the number of those who are annually employed in each division; or, the judgment and scrupulous regard to the general interest, with which the productive fund is divided into farmers, mechanics, merchants, and coiners. He is able upon the advantages derived from the division of labour, but he is totally silent as to the number of labourers in a given population, which ought to be employed in each division, so as to carry the interest of the whole to the highest practicable state of perfection. He has left this calculation to the accident of individual choice, as to the profession which they should follow; to consummate ignorance and unprincipled disregard of the general interest; and hence, so far as is depended upon him to avert them, the pernicious, as I shall shew, disproportion between our productive and unproductive funds of labour, and the excess of numbers employed in one division, and the deficiency in another, which is unavoidable when chance is the guide, and can do no other than defeat all the purpose of the division of labour; than create that dead stock of one description, and a scarcity of another, which is no less injurious in its consequence than if the hands that created it were added to the drones which form the unproductive fund. To the evils of this case, to withhold labour from market, can do no other than add to the amount of the labour lost by so doing. To

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illustrate those cases, and demonstrate the pernicious tendency of your principle, let us take the population of a nation at 15 in number, and, suppose that the general interest points out the necessity of employing three in the agricultural, three in the mechanical, three in the mercantile, and three in the coinage division of labour; the remaining three I assume are clerks in office, and limited annuitants past labour, who by industry and prudence in youth, created a fund sufficient to render old age independent of parochial or accidental charity. Let us then take the produce of agriculture as wholly composed of grain, and in quantity at 3 bushels, or a bushel per head of the number employed in that division of labour; and the sum of money which is required to prevent the necessity of bartering the disposable part of the grain for the disposable productions of the other divisions, at 1s. 6d. or 6d. per head of those employed in the coinage division. In this relative state of the medium of exchange, and the exchangeable supply, and supposing the whole of the one to be exchanged for the whole of the other, the price of the grain is necessarily fixed at 6d. per bushel. Let us next suppose that, to satisfy the demand of the party withholding their labour from market to secure an advance of wages, an addition of 1s. 3d. or 6d. must be made to the circulating medium\*; to even which, supposing dexterity, skill, and judgment to be incapable of extension, an additional hand must be employed in the coinage division of labour; and which, as there are none unemployed, must be taken either from agriculture, mechanism, or trade; say, therefore, agriculture. In this case it is but cause and

\* This addition does not follow as a necessary consequence, because any sum circulated, for instance, ten times in any given time, produces all the effects of a sum ten times its amount circulated once in the same given time; whether as to profit or loss, the enhancement of price, or the depreciation of money. This being the law of nature in the case, and taking it for granted that the labour required to coin and so to circulate the small sum, is equal to that which is necessary to coin and circulate the large one, it matters not to which, (increase of quantity, or quick return) we impute the effect. But, as the effect is indisputable on the one or the other of the principles, I impute it to an increase of quantity, as an idea rendered more familiar to our minds by the necessity we feel ourselves under of paying more money as things get dear, vulgarly speaking.

effect, that the transposition of the agriculturer into a coiner, reduces the stock of grain from three to two bushels, increases the medium of exchange from 1s. 6d. to 2s. raises the price of grain from 6d. to 1s. per bushel, and robs both the labourer and the employer of 1s. 3d. of their real income, while looking through the fallacious medium of pounds, shillings, and pence, they see their wealth increased in the proportion of 1s. 3d. If this be no proof of the destructive of its abject tendency of your principle, if this be no evidence that as price rises and as nations advance in nominal riches, they fall into real or relative poverty, what testimony can we require to convince us, that as we verge into darkness so we recede from the light? The case, however, with all its horrid aspects, does not exhibit in full the malignity of its nature. As your scheme has risen the price of grain from 6d. to 1s. per bushel, it has depreciated the relative or exchangeable value of money 50 per cent. that is, a shilling or sixpence can purchase no more grain or any thing else than 6d. or 3d. could when you began to withhold labour from market. The inevitable consequence therefore, is, that the clerks in office and limited annuitants, who as such are excluded from any share of the money which you brought into circulation, are cheated out of half their real income, while their nominal revenue remains whole and undiminished: and, therefore, as to labour they cannot, to beg they must not be ashamed. Could a doubt remain, Sir, as to the application of this theory in all its circumstances, to remove it is only necessary to compare the present real income of the labourer and the annuitant as reduced, and the number of paupers as increased by the practice of withholding goods and stock from market, with the state of both at the revolution of 1688, when the *patriotic* Whigs introduced paper money as the means of enabling merchants and farmers so to do. At that glorious æra (as the Whigs still term it, and as rendered so by the solidity of the basis on which it established the freedom of trade, or the right of every man to do as he pleases, as to the sending or withholding his property from market); the average price of common labour in England and Wales, was about 6s. a week, as near as can be calculated from the statement given by Sir F. M. Eden of its price in each country; and that of bread about 5d. the quarter loaf, if so much; but critical exactness is not necessary. In 1806 the average price of labour is about 1s. a week; and that of the quarter loaf above 13d. The fact, then, is, that at the former period a nominal revenue of 6s. a week, gave



a real income of about  $14\frac{1}{2}$  quartern loaves to the labourer and annuitant, while at the latter a nominal revenue of 11s., (nearly double the amount) gives only a real income of 10 quartern loaves and  $\frac{2}{7}$ , to the labourer; and the annuitant of 6s. a week is reduced to the shorter allowance of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  quartern loaves. And if we refer to 1800 when bread was 1s. 10d. per quartern, and the wages of labour not higher if so high as it now is, we shall find that the labourer had *of right* but 6; and the annuitant of 6s. but  $3\frac{1}{2}$  quarterns a week; the first, of course, losing considerably above  $\frac{1}{2}$  and the latter about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their real income in 1688. And how? More than by any other means, by the practice which prevailed in 1800 of borrowing money from bankers (which they could lend with ease, because "it cost them only the paper on which they wrote") to pay rents, &c. &c., and so to secure the ability of withholding cattle, &c. from market; and, I defy all the calculators on earth (of course including the patriotic and intelligent Agricultural Society), to prove the contrary. They may, however, attempt to prove, if the troublesome exhibition of bulls, boars, and rams, and the delightful amusement of seeing "the breed of cattle and sheep" crossed, give them time to reflect, that, as a fair reasoner, I ought to have taken the average price of bread in the present and last century, and not its price in any particular year in each, as the data of my calculation. This will do to shew to those who have weathered the storm of high price, what they may have gained or lost by its violence; but, in a national point of view, and in the case of the labourers and limited annuitants, whom its fury have dashed upon the hard and cold rocks of parochial charity, it is false and inapplicable; and for the plainest of all plain reasons; namely, that the low price of bread in one year cannot unbolt the workhouse during their natural lives, and set at large, with their little household furniture about them, morality of character, and independence of mind, the enslaved and unpitied victims of its high price in a prior year. As to the increase of paupers, I make a calculation of it on two principles, and leave you to take your choice or to chuse a better. In 1688 the total rates collected under the denomination of poors rate, amounted only to £665,362. (Vide Sir F. M. Eden on the State of the Poor.) In 1803 the total rates under the same denomination amounted to £5,348,000, (nearly nine times the above amount) of which £1,034,000 was expended in church and highway rates, &c. &c. (Vide Rose's Observations on the Poor Laws.) By this statement it appears, that

the latter rates bear about the proportion of 1s. 5d. to the total rate collected; and supposing them to have done so in 1668, the actual poors rate at that period was about £532,290. Dividing this sum in equal parts, and taking that of each pauper at 5d. per day, the then price of the quartern loaf, their total number amounted only to 19,586. And, 2dly, Mr. Rose's gives the present annual average expense of the poor per head, in and out of the workhouse, at £3. 17s. 9½ but for the sake of even numbers, say £3. 18s. And no doubt can remain that the average per head in 1688 was lower than £3. 18s. in the proportion between the high value of money in that year, and its low value in 1806; that is, in the proportion between 5d. the then, and 13d. the now price of the quartern loaf. I say, therefore, if 13d. gives an average expense of £3. 18s. per head, what average expense per head will 5d. give? Answer £1. 10s. We have, therefore, only to divide the poors rate, £532,290. by £1. 10s. to know with sufficient certainty that the poor, in and out of the workhouse in 1688, did not exceed 354,860. Until I saw Mr. Rose's Observations on the Poor Laws I have always understood, that the poor in and out of the workhouse amounted to 1,200,000. He however, gives their number at only 1,039,716. But as he has left out of his estimate of the population of Middlesex (818,129) that of London (862,845 according to the Morning Chronicle of April 28, 1802), and of course as he is likely to have taken no notice of the poor of London, I am inclined to think that 1,200,000 is the more correct number of the two. To which, perhaps, we may add 300,000 more, who receive relief in hospitals and alms-houses, and in the multiplicity of other asylums, garrets, cellars, barns, stables, &c. &c. in which the evils of free trade, of our right to do as we please with our own property, of choosing for ourselves whether we shall follow useful labour, or mischievous speculation branch out, deprive the poor of the means of supporting themselves, and extort from philanthropy the scanty allowance of private charity. But, whether this description of poor be 300 or 300,000, and whatever may have been the corresponding number to it at the glorious revolution of 1688, a well founded doubt, I think, cannot remain, that the poor in and out of the workhouse have increased since, in nearly a quadruple proportion: while the increase of population does not perhaps amount to 1-ninth of its present state, if Dr. Price be correct in taking it at 8,000,000 in 1688. But, if I may quote the epithet applied by Lord Mel-



ville to the plea of parliamentary reform, while *his plea* was that of the Treasurership of the Navy, what can the increase of population amount to in justification of increased poor, but to "a cover of rascality," or a want of all sense, reflection, and information. Since it is plain matter of fact, that no poverty can arise from numbers, while millions upon millions of acres of ground lie uncultivated, or are mischievously cultivated into parks, lawns, and pleasure grounds, if the poor were allowed to occupy it, and provide for themselves. Since it is plain demonstration, that it is not from our number that our calamities arise, but from the licentiousness not liberty, the disorder not regularity, the selfishness not patriotism, the cruelty not justice, the indolence not industry, and therefore, the poverty not riches, which as naturally arises to the nation, from "the right of every man to do as he pleases with his own property," and as to the choice of his profession, as it would do to a private family, were its head foolish enough to confer such right on its individual members, or, were such members ignorant enough to demand such right for themselves.—For the further confirmation of these truths, or to exhibit the proportion which the exercise of this right has established between our indolence and industry, I beg to refer you to the Political Register of the 23d August, where you will find, I believe, on the best evidence of circumstances, that "the number of those who are annually employed in useful labour" (in England and Wales) amounts only to 2,180,490, while "that of those who are not so employed" amounts to no less than 7,162,082. From this incredible, and destructive disproportion between our productive and unproductive funds of labours, you will naturally conclude, that if our annual supply be not actually in that state of scantiness which threatens us with internal anarchy, or external slavery, it is relatively so deficient as to leave little stock to feed, but much labour to render precarious and insupportable the lives and health of the 1-fifth of the population, on whose industry, the not regulating our public liberty by the rules adopted in our private families, has made us to rest for all that is near and dear to us as men, as patriots, and as believers in the moral justice of the deity. While these evidences of the dilemma into which, as the immediate cause, the practice of withholding goods and stock from market, or, of bringing them to sale on terms which the poor cannot reach, have placed us, and of the tendency of your Plan to furnish us as individuals, and to accelerate our downfall as a people, are fresh in your memory. Nay,

while you must be alive to the conviction, that no plan can succeed in reducing the poor's rate, or prevent its growth, but such will convert multitudes of the idlers who compose our unproductive into useful labourers, and furnish them with land, &c. to work upon. I shall take the liberty to suggest the principle of a plan, which I think has the contrary tendency to that of yours, and therefore, will secure your object. And as the evils of the system which we would correct originate in its fundamental *defections*; and as all plans must ultimately fail if they be *fundamentally* wrong, I have to request you will permit your zeal in the cause to point out what you may conceive to be the defections of mine, with the same degree of freedom with which I exposed those that appear to me in yours; so that we may at last meet, if we do not at present agree. As our happiness or misery, slavery or independence, depend upon the abundance or scantiness of our annual supply, every plan of the nature of ours, should have two objects in view; namely, to secure the abundance of such supply, so far as it rests with labour, skill, dexterity, and judgment so to do; and to divide it among the different members of the community as justice and sound policy may direct. As to the first of these objects, instead of an abundance, it must appear from the disproportion between our productive and unproductive funds of labour, that we have either to contend with an alarming scantiness\*, or, that the pressure of labour is so great on the few, comparatively, who have to perform it, as to render their lives and health short and precarious, and their loyalty a miracle of the most miraculous nature; and with respect to the second, a doubt cannot remain, so far as it relates to the labourer, that on every principle of justice and sound policy, he is entitled to that portion of

\* The great majority of the idlers and the industrious most sensibly feel a scantiness; and unless it be supposed that so much of the annual supply as they are deficient of, be actually suffered to rot in storehouses it is impossible to doubt the existence of a scarcity to the amount of the scarcity they feel. They will not however dive for the cause below the mere skin-deep practice of withholding goods and stock from the markets, or of bringing them to sale at a price which they cannot reach. And if the love of truth, or, a sense of danger, should inspire any man to lead the mount of their depth, it is seldom but what he is deemed a fool or accused with revolutionary designs of a criminal nature.



food and raiment, &c. which is necessary to prolong his life and health. Such portion, whatever may be its weight or measure, evidently bears some proportion to the stock of the employer; say, then, for the sake of argument, one-eighth. The question, then, is, how to secure this allowance, subject to no diminution from the insatiable avarice of the employer, as displayed in the practice of withholding his stock from market, of bringing it to sale on terms which the labourer cannot reach, and of regulating wages without any regard to the necessity of his servants; in short, subject to no other variation in quantity than such as must unavoidably arise to all parties from the natural casualties of seasons and trade. If we do not look through the irremidably delusive medium of money, (indisputably so while our very rags are converted into currency, at the pleasure of corporate bodies and individuals, and the mines of Peru are permitted to vomit their gold upon our shores,) there is no question at all upon the subject; it is only to pay the one-eighth in kind, whatever may be its weight or measure; or, if more convenient to both parties, and if paid yearly, discharge it in money, (even if in rag money so much the better, since it requires less labour to coin and manage it,) amounting to one-eighth of the price for which the whole stock may have been sold; and when paid by the week, it is only necessary to divide the annual allowance into weekly shares, and to regulate the money value of each by the average weekly price of corn or bread, these being of all standards of value the least subject to variation. This is the principle of my plan, and so far as payments in kind go, it is not the delusive phantom of metaphysical abstractions, or, the perturbed offspring of a revolutionary mind. It was, to a considerable extent, the mode of paying rents and wages in the northern parts of Great Britain even within my own recollection; and, it is not many centuries ago, when the same mode prevailed in England, as it still continues to do in some places, with respect to the tithes; nor is it farther back than the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when "It was enacted that one-third of the rent of all college leases should be reserved in corn, to be paid either in kind or according to the current prices at the nearest public market. The money arising from this corn-rent, though originally but a third of the whole, is, in the present times," (when Dr. A. Smith wrote) "according to Dr. Blackstone, commonly near double of what arises from the other two-thirds." I cannot, therefore, be ac-

cused with broaching visionary and untried ideas, though I must plead guilty to the charge of holding revolutionary principles. I certainly do, in proportion as I feel for the honour of human nature, and desire the peace, prosperity, happiness, and independence of my country, wish for a revolution sanctioned by King, Lords and Commons, in parliament assembled; which, by converting paper credit into torches, idlers and speculators into useful labourers, would light us back to the times when payments in kind were in fashion, and extend the principle of Queen Elizabeth's Act, to payments of all kinds. For, I believe from the self-evident merits of the principle, as shewn by Dr. Blackstone, when contrasted with the demerits of the present mode as established by its consequences to the labourer and the limited annuitant within the last century, that had Queen Elizabeth so extended it herself, she would not have had the mortification of being the first sovereign in the universe, perhaps, who had to reduce the poor laws into a system, possessing no other merit than the mere ability of preventing the dead bodies of the poor from becoming a nuisance in the streets and hedges, for the short time compared with eternity the power could remain, with a progressively diminishing number of useful labourers to support them. Queen Elizabeth erred most egregiously (if she had more in view than the interest of individuals, as it depends on commerce and speculation) in preferring this system to the extension of the principle of her own 18th act. to payments of all kinds; but they are still more in error, if not in fault, whose minds are not made up as to the self-evident causes of increasing poor; because, while they are hesitating whether the fault lies in the poor laws or in the system with which those laws have to contend, the number of poor is increasing and must continue to do so, till the laws of labour secure to the labourer that portion of food, raiment, &c. which is necessary to prolong his life and health, and which, with prudence on his own part, and the aid of your institution, will render him independent of parochial charity when past labour; and to proprietors of all descriptions that protection of property, which they are insultingly told is given to it by law, while by all the evidences of sensation and reflection, they know to the contrary, according to every idea that is universally attached to the words, protection and security. Sir, the question is not, what are the contingent and concomitant evils on the principle of this plan, for no human invention can be without such; but whether they are fewer in number, or less malignant in their nature, than those

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that are so on the principle of the plan at present acted upon, or that of yours if carried into execution, and that would be so on the other scheme proposed by the Rev. Mr. Maltus is carried into practice, viz. (as given in substance by Mr. Rose) "To restrain the marriage of the poor," that is in its tendency to encourage beastly and unnatural crimes ["as the means of diminishing the number of labourers and thereby raising the price of labour;" for, if they appear to be so on the fairest principles of calculation that can apply in the case, we are bound, by the common rules of prudence, which in all cases enjoins us to chuse of two evils the least, to give them the preference. Bearing in mind that the reduced and reducing state of our productive fund of labour, and the increased and increasing condition of our stock of paupers, promise to leave us but little time, comparatively, to make our election. As a fellow labourer in the same vineyard, and with every sentiment of esteem and respect that must be due to any man in that capacity, however mistaken in opinion,—I am, Sir, yours, &c.

Sept. 5th, 1836.

C. S.

#### SINKING FUND.

Sir;—I observe a correspondent, under the signature of X. T., in your Register of the 6th of this month, has done me the honour to notice my figures, relative to the Sinking Fund, as compared with a certain deficiency of revenue, and consequent annual loans to supply that deficiency. Your correspondent says, that such a statement as mine never entered the brain of any person except myself. I should almost suspect the sincerity of this declaration, for it is difficult to account for the display of so much of his own profundity, when, in his opinion, he has nothing but the ignorance of a solitary individual to combat. I must entreat, however, of your correspondent, not to be angry with me, if I confess myself so incorrigible, that he has left me, instead of producing conviction to my mind, exactly where he found me. I have a right, to say, at the same time, in justice to my principles, that I should be infinitely more gratified, as a friend to my country, to acknowledge his triumph, than he to claim it, if I had met with demonstration instead of assertion, founded, as I think, in gross and palpable error. Having no purpose on earth to serve, but what ought to be common to us all, namely, to establish the evidence of truth, I shall concisely endeavour to convince others if I cannot the gentleman who has so confidently challenged my figures, that they are much more easily challenged than refuted. If, indeed, I could flatter

myself that *his* notions of the efficacy, I seemingly ought to say omnipotence, of the Sinking Fund, had taken possession of no other "brain" than his own, I confess I should be very little inclined, though he has not shewn me the same indulgence, to disturb an individual's harmless pleasures of imagination or flights of fancy. Believing, however, as I solemnly do, that deception on this subject has long been, and still continues to be, part of the system which has so powerfully contributed to the difficulties of our present situation, and that must, if not very soon arrested in its baneful progress, produce consequences incalculably dangerous to the country; I shall act consistently with my former endeavours, however feeble they may have been, if I do not suffer the futility of X. T.'s calculations to pass unnoticed. His figures will admirably suit the meridian of the Stock Exchange, and have, for any thing I know, no more laudable object in view. I deem it, however, more consonant with liberality, to impute the purest motives to X. T., and assuming, therefore, that he is, like myself, actuated solely by a desire to promote the interests of the country, too long, as I certainly think, made subservient to interested imposture and delusion; I shall be glad, if I be able to convince him, that he is completely mistaken in the ground of his attack upon me. Should I succeed in so doing, he will feel it a duty to confess his error, and I call upon him to do so. X. T. says he will confine his observations merely to my postscript, and hopes to convince me of an error that will upset the whole of my argument. I accept freely his challenge on the ground he has chosen, and will, therefore, for the sake of brevity, confine myself to an illustration of the position laid down in that postscript. This I propose to do by adducing a comparison so familiar and apposite, that, unless I greatly over-rate its perspicuity, cannot fail to be clearly understood by even a very superficial person; certainly not by a man of the research and investigation of X. T.—When X. T. says that the interest on 140 millions, to be borrowed by fourteen equal annual sums of 10 millions, will only amount to 52 millions, I perceive that he and I go upon very different data. He has just overlooked, *accidentally* I suppose, that when a man continues to expend 1000l. beyond his income, and borrows that sum at 5 per cent., he must also borrow at the expiration of the year 50l. at 5 per cent. to pay the interest. There is one part of the letter of X. T. so strikingly absurd, that I am half inclined to think him not serious in his opposition to my statement. I had remarked that, supposing, for argument's sake, the commissioners



of the Sinking Fund to have redeemed 140 millions, they would be able, by the employment of that amount of capital at compound interest of 5 per cent., to redeem about as much more in 14 years. On the other hand, I had stated, that annual loans of 10 millions for the same period, to supply an actual deficiency of revenue, would create a new debt of 205 millions. X. T. says, that this is an admission from my own figures of 75 millions in favour of the Sinking Fund. According to X. T.'s conclusion, therefore, an estate worth 250l., encumbered by a debt of 205l., would be of more value to the possessor than an estate worth 140l. *free from incumbrance!!!* If X. T. will re-consider this statement, I dare say he will make a *trifling* change in his figures, as it will only be to substitute 65 *against*, instead of 75 millions *in favour of*, the Sinking Fund.—To you, Mr. Cobbett, whose attention has been so unremittingly directed to the subject of our finances, and who are evidently impressed with the immense importance of their real situation being understood by the country at large, I shall make no apology for requesting your insertion of the following statement, if you think it will afford any degree of elucidation. I will suppose a person to have the reversion of 20,000l. capital with its accumulation, invested at 5 per cent. compound interest, during a period of 14 years. It is unnecessary for me to state, that, at the expiration of that term, the capital would be nearly, but not quite doubled. Now let us try the effect, if such a person, depending solely on this reversionary property, or Sinking Fund, if you please, with its accumulating interest, shall, during the 14 years in question, regularly expend the sum of 1500l. per annum, to defray the expenses of his living. To avoid obscurity from fractional parts, I will suppose that he shall, at the commencement of the first year, borrow that sum of A. At the end of the first year he borrows of B. 75l. to pay the interest due to A. For the second year he borrows of C. for his current expenses 1500l. and will then be in debt to A. B. and C. conjointly, 3075l. He then borrows of D., to pay the interest for one year, 153l. 15s. due on the three preceding loans. He next borrows of E., for the current expenses of the third year, the usual sum of 1500l., and is then in debt to A. B. C. D. and E. conjointly, for money borrowed at interest of 5 per cent., 4728l. 15s., and he therefore borrows of F., to pay one year's interest to his respective creditors, the sum of 236l. 8s. 9d., making altogether 4965l. 3s. 9d.—I will not proceed further. Sir, with this operation of common arithmetic, as it is unnecessarily occupying a

part of your valuable Register. X. T. can himself, if he pleases, pursue it, and he will find, that, at the end of 14 years, our hopeful spendthrift will have sunk more than half his fortune, and, should he persist on the same plan for 14 years longer, would certainly be *insolvent* in the sum of about 12,000l. If such be the fact, and figures are very obstinate when rightly placed, what must we think of that bewildered, superficial minister, to use no harsher term of reproach, who obstinately *persevered*, for I never blamed the original attempt, in the pernicious measure of the Sinking Fund, while a deficiency of revenue compelled him to contract more of *new* than could possibly be redeemed of *old* debt? I have not only contended that such deficiency of revenue *at present* exists, but that a deficiency, beyond the power of the Sinking Fund, is inseparable from the peace-establishment, even with an allowance for the retrenchment of expenditure much exceeding any saving that government will dare to risk. Surely never was there a more cruel mockery of the common sense of the nation than the Sinking Fund!! But in this, as in all the other prominent measures of that wretched politician, its projector, it is in vain to search for any depth of sound policy or solid wisdom; in short, to trace any thing but miserable state quackery.—I should have sooner noticed the communication of X. T., if my mind had been less deeply affected by the alarming illness and recent death of that great man, to whom I had the honour of addressing my former letters on the subject of finance. For the loss of such a man, personal attachment alone would, at any time have occasioned me real sorrow: at the present crisis, I deplore it as a serious national misfortune. This loss, no doubt, demands increased energy on the part of every friend to the country, and the most dignified tribute of respect to the memory of Mr. Fox will unquestionably be the imitation of his conduct, by our strenuous and *united* exertions in its defence. Under the immediate influence however, of so afflicting an event, either that liberal statesmen, *in whom none of the meaner passions found a place*, must have been much less esteemed and admired than by myself, or the mind have more firmness than I ever possessed, that can boast of any thing resembling composure.—Yours, &c. J. T.—*London, 23d September, 1806.*

## PUBLIC PAPERS.

*Letter from his Majesty the Emperor and King, to his Eminent Highness the Prince Primate.*

My Brother;—The form of our com-

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munications in our quality of protector, with the sovereigns assembled in congress at Frankfort, not being yet determined, we have considered that nothing could be more suitable than to address the present letter to your Eminent Highness, in order that it may be communicated to the two colleges. In truth what organ can we more naturally choose, than that of a prince, to whose wisdom has been confided the task of preparing the first fundamental statute. We should have waited until that statute had been decreed by the congress, and had been communicated to us, if it did not contain dispositions which personally regard us. That alone has induced us to take to ourselves the initiative, in order to submit our sentiments and our reflexions, to the wisdom of the confederated princes.—When we accepted the title of Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, we had nothing in view but to establish in right what had existed in fact for many ages. In accepting it we contracted the double obligation of guaranteeing the territories of the confederation against foreign troops, and the territory of each confederate against the enterprizes of others. These all preserving obligations are pleasing to our heart, they are conformable to those sentiments of benevolence and friendship of which we have, without ceasing, given proofs to the members of the confederation. But these our duties towards them end. We do not wish to be understood as arrogating to ourselves that portion of sovereignty which was exercised by the Emperor of Germany as Sovereign. The government of the people whom Providence has confided to us occupies all our time, we could not see an increase of our obligations without alarm. As we do not wish to be ascribed to us the good which sovereigns may effect in their states, neither do we wish to be imputed to us the evils which the vicissitudes of human affairs may introduce. The internal affairs of each state we do not regard. The Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine are sovereigns, without any sovereign over them. We have recognized them as such. The discussions which they may have with their subjects cannot, therefore, be brought before a foreign tribunal. The diet is the tribunal whose office it is to maintain peace between the different sovereigns who compose the confederation. Having recognized all the other princes who form the Germanic Body, as independent sovereigns, we cannot recognize any one as their sovereign. We have no relations of sovereignty with the Confederation of the Rhine, but merely those of simple protection. More powerful than the confederate princes, we wish to use the su-

periority of our power, not to restrain their rights of sovereignty, but to guarantee their rights in their plenitude.—We pray God, my brother, that he may have you in his holy and worthy keeping. Given at our Imperial Palace of St. Cloud, the 11th of Sept. 1806.—NAPOLEON.—Certified to be conformable to the original.—C. M. TALLEYRAND, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prince of Benevento.

*Circular Note addressed to their Majesties, Imperial and Royal Highnesses, Dukes and Most Serene Princes, associated in the Confederation of the Rhine, on the part of the Prince Primate of the Confederation.*

The Prince Primate of the confederation has the honour to inform their Majesties, Imperial and Serene Highnesses, &c. &c. that his Minister Plenipotentiary Baron D'Albini repaired to Frankfort at the beginning of this month, to make preparations in his name for the opening of the diet, in as much as might accord with the intentions of the associated kings and sovereigns. The act of confederation having designated that term for proposing a fundamental statute, the opening of the sittings will depend probably upon the arrival of the plenipotentiaries. Ardently desiring to deserve the confidence of the associated kings and princes, the Prince Primate regards it as the first duty of his office, not to propose any thing which might not be generally acknowledged as of essential advantage to the confederation, as well as consistent with the perfect independence of the confederated sovereigns.—If the formation of a fundamental statute cannot be the work of a day, and that an object of such importance requires the most mature reflection, it is notwithstanding equally true, that it is desirable that the confederation should from its commencement be established upon an immoveable basis. Its object is to obtain tranquillity and security, the true happiness of nations, and to enable sovereigns to occupy themselves without interruption in the prosperity of their states, in increasing the happiness of the towns and country, by the enlightened attention of a prudent and parental government, and by the encouragement of useful arts and sciences, the true sources of the splendour of august dynasties and sovereign houses. The South of Germany, after ages of misfortunes, troubles, and wars, cannot but ardently wish that its internal happiness should be established upon an imperishable basis. The Prince Primate submits to the wisdom of the confederated kings and princes the decision of the question, whether the fundamental



maxim of the inviolability of the territory of the confederation, be not the first and most important of all the bases of the public prosperity? Whether it be agreeable to the high wisdom of the confederated kings and princes never to allow a passage to foreign troops, though even disarmed, without the consent of the entire confederation? And, finally, if it be not also conformable to the dignity of independent sovereigns, that the representatives at the diet of Frankfort, engaged in assuring domestic tranquillity, should neither send ministers to, nor receive them from foreign courts; a right which is naturally reserved to each of the august kings and sovereigns, and not to a meeting of their plenipotentiaries.—If the diet of Frankfort should hereafter apply to his Majesty the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, as protector, to obtain his guarantee of such an inviolability of the territory of the confederation, we may be allowed to entertain a hope that this favour, one of the first importance, will not be refused on the part of that great man, who has known how to respect the inviolability of one of the most important countries in the world, notwithstanding the obstacles which appeared to oppose it.—The Prince Primate submits these observations to the kings, princes, &c. &c. associated in the Confederation of the Rhine, and will always feel happy if his zealous disinterestedness can deserve their confidence and approbation.—CHARLES.—*Aschaffenburg, Sept. 18, 1806.*

#### DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPER.

**CAPTURE OF BUENOS AYRES.**—*From the London Gazette Extraordinary, dated Downing Street, September 13th, 1806. Concluded from p. 544.*

I have probably trespassed on a line that does not immediately belong to me, but I could not resist the gratification of relating to their lordships what I saw; assuring myself, at the same time, they will be convinced, if the enemy had given the squadron an equal opportunity, I should have had the pleasing duty of reporting an honourable issue to the effect of their eminent zeal and exertions.—On the 27th, in the morning, we saw some firing near the banks of the River Chello, but it blew so hard that it was totally impracticable to have any communication with the shore during that day.—Early on the 28th, a royal salute was fired from the Castle of Buenos Ayres in honour of his Majesty's colours being hoisted in South America, and instantly returned by

the ships lying off the town.—I now consider it to be a proper moment for acknowledging in terms of the sincerest gratitude, my high sense of the zealous and animated conduct of every officer and man in the squadron which I have the extraordinary good fortune to command.—Captain Rowley, with Captain Edmonds under his orders, continued as long as the weather would permit an advantageous demonstration off Maldonado.—Captain Donnelly, who did me the favour of requesting I would go up the river in the *Narcissus*, and to whom, from his rank, no specific service could be assigned in our small scale of operations, applied himself in every occasion where he could promote the objects of the expedition: and, as he is charged with this dispatch, I take the liberty of recommending him to their lordships' protection, under a full conviction they will obtain, through him, every information which they have a right to expect from an officer of great intelligence and long meritorious service.—I consider Captain King, with the officers of the marine battalion, so completely under the report of General Beresford that I shall only state to their lordships my extreme satisfaction on hearing personally from the general how highly he appreciated every part of their conduct, particularly the celerity with which they transported the artillery and troops across the Rio Chello after the bridge was burnt by the enemy.—Lieutenant Talbot of the *Encounter* manifested great zeal in every instance where it was necessary to call on him; Lieutenant Groves of the *Diadem* was also very active in landing the ordnance and ordnance stores, and I think it highly proper to state to their lordships that the masters and crews of the different transports behaved with great attention during the whole of the service.—I inclose a copy of the terms\* granted to the inhabitants after the capture of the city, by which their lordships will see that the coasting vessels in the river, supposed with their cargoes to amount to one million and a half of dollars, were restored to the proprietors; for an early record to the country of the great liberality of his Majesty's government.—I have the honour to be, &c. **HOMEROPHAM.**

I have sent Lieutenant Groves to take possession of *Ensenada de Baragon*, a port to the Eastward of Buenos Ayres, where I understand there are two gun vessels and two merchant ships.—**H. P.**

\* See Maj. Gen. Beresford's dispatches.